

Top 11

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Eight linebacker at Kansas State in 1966 and 1967.

And in Buford, Lankas has had a good one for four years.

"He's a hitter and that's what I like to see in a linebacker," Lankas said. "He started at linebacker for us all four years and was our defensive player of the year for the second straight year."

Buford was in on 72 tackles this year, 193 over the last three years. He also knocked down four passes, recovered three fumbles and intercepted one pass.

Buford, an All-Northwest Kansas League selection the last two years, had a great game in an 8-7 loss to Stockton in this year's state playoffs. After the game, Wilson called Buford the "best linebacker his team had faced all season."

Offensively at tackle, Buford was a force. Atwood rushed for more than 320 yards a game each of the last two years and most of the yardage came over Buford's side.

DWAYNE CHANDLER

Right now, the best thing McPherson coach Tim Wesselowski likes about Chandler is his age, because the 190-pounder is only a junior.

Chandler has envious speed and physical tools.

Last spring, he ran the state's fast 400 meters (48.8). He also is an excellent basketball player and, of course, a gem on the gridiron.

Chandler, whose brother Vic was a football star at K-State in the mid-'70s, rushed for 1,276 yards on 179 carries (6.9 average) and scored 10 TDs. He also led the Bullpups in receiving with 11 catches for 298 yards (27.0) and five more TDs.

He rushed for more than 100 yards six times, including his last four games which carried the Bullpups to the sub-state round of the Class 5A playoffs.

Chandler was always a threat to break a long run, or turn a pass completion into a big gainer. He broke four runs for 50 or more yards, including an 80-yard TD scamper in a key district victory over Salina South. He also caught TD passes of 43 and 40 yards.

ERIC CLAYTON

As teams in the I-70 League discovered this season, Clayton isn't just a nice, big teddy bear at 6-6, 255.

"With a kid as big as Eric, the first thing people wonder about him is can he play," said Salina Central coach Marvin Diener said. "A lot of big kids are just teddy bears. Eric's not that way. He plays with a lot of aggressiveness and tenacity."

It takes considerable talent to earn a first-team spot on the All-I-70 League team and Clayton was a unanimous selection this season.

Clayton didn't just earn that honor by being a rugged head-up player. He consistently surprised people with his ability to move laterally down the line of scrimmage and down the field to make tackles.

"One thing about Eric that will always stand out in my mind is a play he made downfield against Dodge City," Diener said. "Dodge City's running back got outside on Eric and broke free downfield. We were able to slow him down just before he scored and the guy who made the tackle was Eric. For a big man, he can cover a lot of area. He comes across the field to make plays where a lot of guys his size wouldn't."

To keep Clayton fresh, Diener didn't play his junior giant on the offensive line, but Clayton occasionally contributed on offense as a blocking back, and even carried the ball twice.

KEVIN DOUGHERTY

Abilene coach Paul Dennis is thankful to Oklahoma's Turpin High School.

That's where Dougherty was schooled his first two years of high school before moving with his family to Abilene the summer of 1986.

Dougherty, a 6-1, 185-pounder,

1987 all-area teams

SECOND TEAM				
Offense				
Player, School	Hgt.	Wgt.	Yr.	Position
James Allen, Norton	6-1	165	Sr.	End
Steve Greenan, Sacred Heart	5-10	142	Sr.	End
Matt Comau, Plainville	6-0	190	Sr.	Lineman
David Hayes, Abilene	5-8	215	Sr.	Lineman
Scott Miller, Ellsworth	6-4	210	Sr.	Lineman
Matt Niewald, Beloit	6-3	240	Sr.	Lineman
Dan Wessel, Plainville	6-1	185	Sr.	Lineman
Jan Siebert, Abilene	6-3	180	Jr.	Quarterback
Joe Dreher, Plainville	5-8	160	Sr.	Running back
Chris Jones, Abilene	6-2	190	Sr.	Running back
Robert Winters, Stockton	5-10	160	Jr.	Running back

DEFENSE				
Player, School	Hgt.	Wgt.	Yr.	Position
Hans Baker, Beloit	5-10	190	Sr.	Lineman
Mike Jones, Stockton	6-2	216	Sr.	Lineman
Vernon Rupp, TMP-Marian	6-2	200	Sr.	Lineman
T.J. Slansky, Stockton	6-5	210	Sr.	Lineman
Brad Taichman, McPherson	5-11	170	Sr.	Linebacker
Mike Godbout, Phillipsburg	5-10	185	Sr.	Linebacker
Thad Opat, Sacred Heart	5-10	170	Sr.	Linebacker
Joe Root, Russell	5-11	185	Sr.	Linebacker
Brian Wellbrock, Hays	5-11	175	Sr.	Linebacker
Brent Coup, Hays	6-0	170	Sr.	Back
Bruce Daise, Osborne	6-1	165	Sr.	Back

THIRD TEAM				
Offense				
Player, School	Hgt.	Wgt.	Yr.	Position
Jim Lampe, Colby	5-7	150	Sr.	End
Travis Still, Sharon Springs	5-9	150	Sr.	End
Tim Boudreau, Southern Cloud	6-3	185	Sr.	Lineman
Wade Bowman, Northern Valley	5-8	165	Sr.	Lineman
Tom Dewey, Atwood	6-3	200	Jr.	Lineman
Carey Feltis, TMP-Marian	6-0	190	Sr.	Lineman
Tim Martin, McPherson	6-2	216	Sr.	Lineman
Mark Gagnon, Sacred Heart	5-9	170	Jr.	Quarterback
Mike Weatherly, Ellsworth	5-10	195	Sr.	Running back
Jeremy Owen, Hill City	5-10	165	Sr.	Running back
Donovan Wallgren, Norton	5-10	160	Sr.	Running back

DEFENSE				
Player, School	Hgt.	Wgt.	Yr.	Position
Brian Fischer, Northern Valley	5-9	175	Sr.	Lineman
Carlos Navins, Hill City	6-3	207	Jr.	Lineman
Jeff Sevier, Norton	6-0	180	Sr.	Lineman
Mike Weatherly, Ellsworth	5-10	195	Sr.	Linebacker
David Willibrant, Clifton-Clyde	6-1	170	Sr.	Linebacker
Chad Arnold, Hillsboro	5-9	170	Sr.	Linebacker
Randy Babcock, Eastern Heights	6-0	185	Sr.	Linebacker
Chad Ditto, Herington	6-0	185	Jr.	Linebacker
Henry Elling, Colby	5-10	180	Sr.	Linebacker
Alitch Gebhardt, Ellsworth	5-10	155	Sr.	Back
Mike Stigge, Washington	6-2	175	Sr.	Back

HONORABLE MENTION

Offense
 Quarterbacks — Rance Ames, Northern Valley; Brent Bohl, Norton; Gunner Boss, Bennington; Jason Kenny, Sharon Springs; Darius Lechtenberger, Colby; Dave Losey, TMP-Marian; Curtis Marozas, Beloit; David Schneider, Centre.
 Running backs — David Blochinger, Southern Cloud; Orgene DesCoteaux, Clifton-Clyde; Kyle Garst, Bennington; Gerald Kennedy, Plainville; Kevin Klein, Hillsboro; Mike Mogenson, Smoky Valley; Larry Ryan, Wakefield; Shane Sammons, Stockton.
 Ends — Darren Grauerholz, Kensington; Kevin Griffiths, Southeast of Saline; Wade Porter, St. Francis; Darren Stanley, Bennington; Keith Weizel, Abilene.
 Linemen — Douglas Berndt, Ell-Saline; Doug Biehler, Herington; Pete Marsh, Ellsworth; Ed Miller, North Central; Todd Smalley, Hays.

Defense
 Linemen — Chris Braccini, St. Francis; Dean Brown, Herington; Travis Kier, Washington; Ken Sparks, Clifton-Clyde.
 Linebackers — Kenny Becker, Tipton; Andy Knoll, Osborne; John Sitka, Centre.
 Backs — Matt Benschel, St. Francis; John Darrow, Southern Cloud; Thomas Hayes, Wakefield; Kurt Nuss, Russell; Tom Omi, Ell-Saline; Steve Tiernan, Tipton.

didn't have any trouble adjusting from the 1A to the 4A level.

As a junior, he led the Pokes in rushing and was a two-way All-North Central Kansas League selection.

This year, he moved to fullback in Dennis' new I-formation and blocked admirably for 1,200-yard rusher Chris Jones.

Dougherty still rushed for 542 yards on 112 carries and scored eight TDs himself. He also caught seven passes for 94 yards. He caught two TD passes in Abilene's regional victory over Maize.

Most impressively, though, was his defensive play at strong safety, or the "monster" position in Abilene's scheme.

He again earned All-NCKL honors and was the leader of the Cowboys' strong defensive unit that was instrumental in Abilene's march to its second state championship.

"Kevin's just an outstanding defensive back," Dennis said. "He's really a great hitter and aggressive tackler. I got smart toward the end of the season and played him up closer to the line. That was a key in us stopping our opponents' best running backs all through the playoffs."

Dougherty played at a linebacker spot most of the 4A state championship game against Paola and made the initial drive-ending hit on Paola quarterback Tiny Van Rheen on fourth-and-a-foot near midfield early in the third quarter with Abilene trailing by seven.

The defensive play gave the Cowboys the momentum they needed to win the game.

Dougherty was in on 113 tackles, recovered three fumbles and intercepted a pass — that in the state championship game — this season.

DANNY HOLLOWAY

Holloway is a player you have to see to fully appreciate.

His stats — 700 yards rushing (7.9 average) and 800 passing — are above average, but with two 1,000-yard rushing backs behind him, Holloway's biggest job was to keep the Tiger offense running efficiently and that he did.

Holloway was a master at running the option and when his team needed it, he reliably made the big play

their next serious test would come in the 1987 state finals, this time against Attica. Northern Valley rolled through the regular season and the playoffs, winning six games on account of the 45-point rule.

In this year's finals, Attica trailed 8-6 late in the first half and was threatening to take the lead. But the Husky defense rose to the occasion and stopped Attica, and the Northern Valley offense went on to score with 1 second left in the half en route to a 20-6 victory.

"I think some of the pressure from that game (Greensburg) carried over to this one (Attica) in the fact that we were able to handle it," Fessenden said.

Still, there are many roads to conquer.

There will always be the question of who is better: Midway-Denton in Eight-Man Division I or Northern Valley in Eight-Man Division II. It's a question that was last answered in the 1982 finals, when Northern Valley

himself.

One of Holloway's best performances came in a 19-18 loss to then Class 4A No. 1 Norton when he rushed for 169 yards, passed for 79 yards and scored two touchdowns.

Afterward, Norton coach Neil Mellillo was impressed.

"He makes good things happen out of bad situations," Mellillo said. "He's the best I've seen out here (northwest Kansas) in a while."

Wilson will miss more than Holloway's physical abilities.

"Danny's been our leader for the last two years," Wilson said. "He made us go offensively and it will be tough losing him."

RANDY HULL

Hull moved to Kansas from Texas two years ago and displayed the physical brand of football associated with that state.

He played center on offensive lines that enabled Redmen running backs to gain more than 8,000 yards on the ground the last two years.

At defensive guard, Hull, a 5-10, 210-pounder, had 61 tackles, 34 solo, and three sacks.

"Randy was an important part of our line for the last two years," Barta said. "He was the best center we've had in a while and will be hard to replace."

MARC PAYTON

Lankas wonders if there is any athletic endeavor Payton wouldn't excel at.

"He's just a super athlete," Lankas said. "He's a great wrestler, a state champion hurdler in track, a good basketball player and can do just about anything on the football field. He's the best back I've coached."

Payton, a 5-11, 165-pounder, has blazing speed — 4.4 in the 40 and 39.5 in the 300-meter intermediate hurdles — outstanding moves in the backfield and great hands.

"Thirteen times we used him at a wide receiver and 13 times we completed the pass to him for a 29-yard average," Lankas said. "Some college coaches believe he might be better at a receiver, but he's also a great running back. Whenever I want to show our younger kids how to run

was back in Division I and Midway-Denton beat the Huskies for the title.

Midway-Denton has won six of seven state titles, including four in a row. Northern Valley has won two straight titles and has been in the finals four times since 1982. They have become, without a doubt, the top two Eight-Man powers in Kansas football.

"I would like to play them," Fessenden said. "I would have liked to have played them this year, when we're up and they're up, just to see how it goes. We'd kind of like to have another shot at them because at that time (the 1982 finals) we didn't know much about them. Now, I think we know a bit more about them and would have a better shot at them."

Life goes on. That is one question that will never be answered, but will be debated for years to come.

At least for now, the sun still comes up at Northern Valley High School, where the word "lose" has — at least for now — ceased to exist on the football field.

with the football, I break out films of Marc."

Payton averaged 8.5 yards a carry in rushing for 1,281 yards. He scored 26 TDs on the ground, caught five TD passes and threw for five more.

In the last two years, Payton averaged 8.0 yards a carry in rushing for 2,945 yards and scored 43 TDs.

Defensively, Payton had 12 interceptions over the last two seasons.

JEFF SIMONEAU

Plenty has been written about this 6-2, 210-pound all-stater.

Simoneau packs great speed and strength with plenty of desire.

He rushed for more than 4,200 yards in three years and was a dominating defensive end.

This season, Simoneau averaged 9.2 yards a carry in gaining 1,707 yards. Last season, he gained a school-record 2,092 yards in leading the Redmen to the 3A state title.

Simoneau's dedication in the off seasons has paid off. He's considered one of the top college prospects in Kansas. He was recently voted Gatorade's Kansas Player of the Year and is now eligible for the company's National Player of the Year award.

"Jeff has made himself into a great high school football player," Barta said. "He has really been a good example to our younger kids in his work habits."

Michigan State, Missouri, Kansas State and Nebraska are among the schools in the running for Simoneau's talents.

Like Brooks Barta, Simoneau was a two-way All-MCL player for the second straight season.

B.J. VINCENT

Northern Valley lost only three games and won two state championships over the last four years and Vincent was the key player in the success.

Vincent, a 5-11, 185-pounder, started four years at linebacker, garnering 318 solo tackles, 214 assists and 11 interceptions.

Vincent had 72 solo tackles this season in leading NV to its second straight eight-man state championship.

Vincent also was a stalwart on offense over the last two years as he rushed for 2,717 yards on 365 carries (7.4 average) and scored 42 TDs. He also caught 39 passes for 389 yards.

This season, Vincent, who played guard his sophomore season because of the Huskies' surplus of good backs, averaged 9.3 yards a carry in amassing 1,348 yards on the ground.

"B.J. was a good player when he came up as a freshman," said NV coach Chuck Fessenden. "As a sophomore, we had to find a spot for him because of his ability, so we played him at guard and he did an excellent job."



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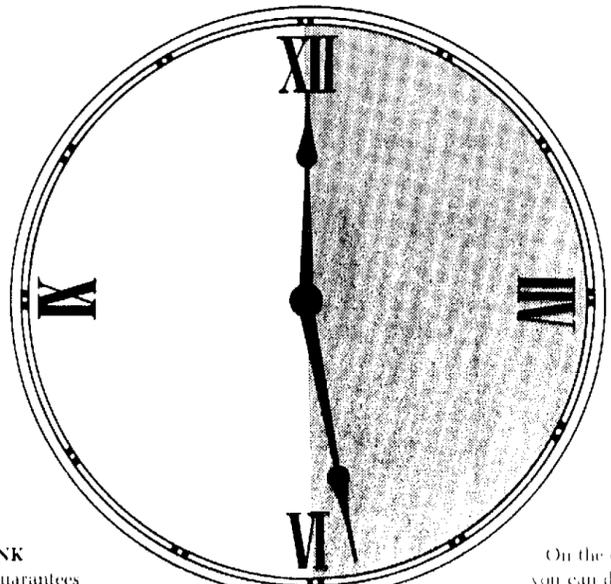
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Coach

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ketball and track athletes," Fessenden said. "It's kind of an all-around program, not just a football program...."

"If we wouldn't have had the success we've had over the past several years, I wouldn't be here, no matter how good of a coach I am. And if I wouldn't have had some good athletes and quite a bit of luck, I wouldn't have been named coach of the year."

Only two times during the Huskies winning streak did the streak seem in jeopardy.

In the 1986 state finals, Northern Valley trilled Greensburg, 10-6, with under two minutes to play. But a length-of-the-field drive capped by a last-second touchdown gave the Huskies a 12-10 win and the first football title in school history.

Little did the Huskies know that